



Monterey County

Parks Commission

Agenda Item #5

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168 West Alisal Street,
1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
831.755.5066

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Consider utilizing County Parks for Organized Recreational Sports

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Parks Commission:

- a. Receive a report on requests to utilize County Parks for Organized Recreational Sports; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

SUMMARY:

RMA has received several requests from organized sports leagues wanting to utilize the fields with County Parks for practices, meets, and tournaments. RMA's understanding is that organized sports leagues have not been permitted to host these types of events within County Parks. Staff is seeking input and recommendations from the Commission for clarification in Monterey County Code Chapter 14.12 and, if allowed, to establish appropriate fees and use guidelines.

DISCUSSION:

Open space and recreation is an essential feature to the residents of Monterey County. County Parks provides opportunities for both active and passive recreation uses including play areas for sports, civic spaces and open grass areas for informal play. Open space and recreation also enables the protection of natural areas, and provides a network for non-vehicular circulation of trails and paths.

The current Parks Fee Article V, identifies those areas within County Parks that are available to rent in advance or at the time of entry into the Park. Staff interprets that the open fields within the County Parks currently are not areas that can be reserved in advance because the Fee Article does not have a fee associated with their use beyond the normal entry fees to the Parks. As such, open fields have traditionally been utilized on a first come first serve basis. In the case of cross-country track meets, RMA has negotiated use agreements with the event hosts.

Over the past few weeks, there have been a few sports organizations that have approached RMA staff requesting to reserve the open fields at Toro Park as well as the newly created Lincoln Park within the East Garrison. These sports activities include the Monterey Bay Soccer League (MBSL) Youth Club requesting the field at Lincoln Park be reserved for organized soccer practices and tournaments six days a week at Lincoln Park. Other organized sports interested in utilizing fields within County Parks include Football Practices and Rugby.

There is nothing to prohibit these groups from using the fields, but only on a first-come, first-served

basis, which makes it hard to schedule a practice/event. On one hand, entering into agreements, if not managed to allow open periods, restricts use of the general public and increases wear and tear of the fields. On the other hand, entering into agreements with organized sport groups provides opportunity for revenue and field maintenance as part of a facility use agreement. If the Commission is interested to allow this type of use, staff would recommend use agreement with each organization in order to formalize the terms.

RMA is currently in the process of updating Monterey County Code Chapter 14.12 (County Parks) and Fee Article V (Park Fees). Staff is requesting input and recommendations from the Parks Commission on modifications or amendments as it pertains to organized sports operating with County Parks.

Prepared by: Shawne Ellerbee, RMA Deputy Director of Administrative Services 

Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director 